

CCD BULLETIN

FROM THE FIELD: CONVERSATIONS ABOUT GROWTH

During the 2004 “Texas Community Futures Forums” sponsored throughout the state by Texas Cooperative Extension, local citizens were given the opportunity to identify critical issues affecting their communities. Based on feedback that growth and development were a key concern in Aransas and Matagorda counties, Logan Respass and John O’Connell of Texas Sea Grant organized and led a series of educational workshops, *Conversations about Growth*, to involve these communities in exploring paths for their future development. The workshop series, financed by Texas Sea Grant’s Smart Growth grant from EPA, was presented between December 2004 and February 2005.

Because residents of Aransas County had expressed concern during the Texas Community Forum about losing their “coastal charm”, Texas Sea Grant’s John Jacob coined the acronym “CHARM”, for “community health and resource management”. He gave talks with this title at inaugural workshops in December in both Rockport (Aransas County) and Bay City (Matagorda County), focusing on the principles of sustainable design. Participants at each of these workshops also discussed local growth and development issues, and conducted walking tours of local neighborhoods.



In January, residents from both counties were invited to participate in a workshop and walking tour in the City of Victoria, midway between Rockport and Bay City. This “walkability audit”, led by Dan Burden, Executive Director of Walkable Communities, Inc., gave them a hands-on understanding of how transportation planning and design impacts livability.

In response to tremendous demand in Aransas County, an additional workshop was held in Rockport in February. Participants at this session examined future possibilities for Aransas County by ranking their preferences in a visual survey of various growth scenarios, and formulated a group process to develop strategies for sustainable growth. The next phase of the project will engage residents and extension personnel in a design charrette for the City of Rockport.

The workshops were well attended by local officials and other residents, who left armed with a greater appreciation of what makes a community strong, vibrant, and attractive. For more information, contact John Jacob at jjacob@tamu.edu and go to the Walkable Communities Inc. website at www.walkable.org. (Also see the report from a 2003 walkability audit conducted by Dan Burden for a similar project in Takoma Park, Maryland, including visual depictions of recommendations, available at <http://207.176.67.2/ecd/development/documents/burden.pdf>.)



COMMUNITY TOOL SHED

Neighborhood-Scale Planning Tools to Create Active, Livable Communities

While many communities subscribe to livability principles, local governments often encounter difficulty making the transition from planning to on-the-ground change. This six-page fact sheet offers several case studies and specific guidelines to help communities develop more detailed plans and create the legal framework required to implement walkable design in their neighborhoods. Download it at:

www.lgc.org/freepub/PDF/Land_Use/fact_sheets/neighborhood_planning.pdf

Real Towns: Making your Neighborhood Work

This workbook, written by Harrison Bright Rue, Director of the Citizen Planner Institute, walks a community through the various steps of conducting a transportation audit. This document is not available electronically, but can be purchased (\$10 for one, discounts for multiple copies) at:

www2.lgc.org/bookstore/detail.cfm?itemId=16

NOTE to participants in **the November 2003 Smart Growth training at EPA**: a copy of *Real Towns* was included in your course binder, under tab #4.

Street Design Guidelines for Healthy Neighborhoods

can help communities implement designs for streets that are safe, efficient and aesthetically pleasing. It features helpful guidelines that specify street widths as well as implementation strategies developed by a team of experts under the leadership of Dan Burden, one of the nation's foremost authorities on traffic calming and the creation of pedestrian- and bike-friendly communities. This document is not available electronically, but can be purchased (\$25) from the Local Government Commission, at:

www2.lgc.org/bookstore/detail.cfm?categoryId=0&typeId=0&itemId=13



RECOMMENDED READING

Pedestrian and Transit-Friendly Design: A Primer for Smart Growth from the International City/County Management Association and Smart Growth Network serves as an annotated checklist of features for walkable communities, separated into “essential”, “desirable” and “additional” categories. To download the document, go to: www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/ptfd_primer.pdf. Or order a hard copy free of charge from ICMA: http://bookstore.icma.org/obs/showdetl.cfm?&DID=7&Product_ID=476&CATID=4

DON'T MISS IT: JUNE 4 WORKSHOP



Photo courtesy of Communications New Brunswick

Reinventing Coastal Communities: Sea Grant's Role and Reward

Saturday June 4, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Samoset Resort, Maine

The National Sea Grant Coastal Communities and Economies Theme Team presents a day-long workshop exploring how urbanization and coastal development is affecting all aspects of Sea Grant's work, from aquaculture to education. Registration fee of \$55 includes all materials, snacks and lunch. Deadline for registration is *Monday May, 16*. To view agenda and registration information, go to: www.soest.hawaii.edu/SEAGRANT/workshop/CCE.

NOTE: If attending other Sea Grant Week 2005 activities, separate registration is required. Please visit www.seagrants.umaine.edu/sgw05.htm for more details.